

A Study of Transferable Strategies in Multilanguage Learning

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Abstract : With the demand of multilingual speakers increasing in the job market, multi-language learning programs have become more and more popular among undergraduate students. A study on multi-language learning strategies is therefore highly demanded on both practical and theoretical levels. Based on previous classification of learning strategies in SLA, and an investigation of BA Modern Language program students (with post-A level L2 and ab initio L3 learning experience from year one), this study explores and compares different types of learning strategies used by multi-language speakers and learners, transferable learning strategies between L2 and L3, and factors affecting the transfer. The results indicate that all the 23 types of learning strategies of L2 are employed when learning L3 from ab initio level, yet with different tendencies. Learning strategy transfer from L2 to L3 (i.e., the learners attribute the applying of these L3 learning strategies to be a direct result of their L2 learning experience) are observed in all 23 types of learning strategies. Comparatively, six types of “cognitive strategies” have higher transfer tendency than others. With regard to the failure of the transfer of some particular L2 strategies and the development of independent L3 strategies of individual learners, factors such as language proficiency, language typology and learning environment have played important roles among others. The presentation of this study will provide audiences with detailed data, insightful analysis and discussion on both theoretical and practical aspects of multi-language learning that will benefit both students and educators.

Keywords : learning strategy, multi-language acquisition, second language acquisition, strategy transfer

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